

"If you would be happy all your life - plant a garden."

... Author Unknown

SAGE LEAVES

The Herb Society of America – Wisconsin Unit

September/October 2019 – Vol XXXX #5

Unit Meetings

Saturday, September 21, 9 am Setup, 9:30 am Social, 10 am Annual Mtg, noon Lunch

Program: Induction of New Members

Budget approval – **Please remember to bring the packet mailed to you this month!**

Location: St Christopher's Church, 7845 N River Road, River Hills

Luncheon: Downton Abbey Tea Party

Tuesday, October 15, 9 am Setup, 9:30 am Social, 10 am Mtg, noon Lunch

Program: Gerry Kovatch, "Jellies and Mustards"

Location: St Christopher's Church, 7845 N River Road, River Hills

Luncheon: Hostess: AJ Star
Soup/Entree: Pat Greathead
Salad: Diane Kescenovitz
Bread/Spread: Cindy Binkowski
Beverage: Sandy Je T'aime
Dessert: Joanne Ruggieri

Editor: Diane Kescenovitz, kescenovitz.diane@att.net – if you will be going out of town for an extended period of time, please notify

Diane of change of address or request e-mail copy – thanks!

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Wisconsin Unit Web: Herb-Society-Wisconsin.org (Editor: Diane Kescenovitz)

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Herb Society of America web: www.herbsociety.org

***If you would prefer receiving your copy of SAGE LEAVES via e-mail,
please let me know – kescenovitz.diane@att.net***

NEWSBUDS...



*Annual Meeting
September 21, 2019
9:00 Set Up; 9:30 – Coffee, Tea
10:00- 12:00 Meeting
12:00 Downton Abbey Tea*

Notes from Melody

September brings the start of a new year of our monthly herb meetings. Hope you have been growing, harvesting and cooking with herbs over the summer. You will be receiving both the Annual Meeting mailing (business envelope) and this edition of Sage Leaves (newsletter printed on green paper) in September.

For our September Annual Meeting on Sat., Sept. 21st: Please bring the copy of the proposed budget found in the mailing, as we will approve the budget for the 2019-2020 fiscal year. Returning members please remember to wear your name tag; new members you will be officially inducted and will receive a name tag. Then remember to RSVP to our tea.

Our future monthly programs and events will provide learning and social activities. I'm excited about our Downton Abbey Tea; wonderful plans have been made for us.

See you in September,

Lady Melody Ann (aka Melody Orban, HSA WI Unit Chair)

Holiday Celebration Luncheon at The Town Club

Please mark your calendar to save December 11, 2019 for our Herb Society – WI Unit Holiday Party.

It will take place at The Town Club on Santa Monica Blvd. in Fox Point.

Friends are invited to attend with you.

An invitation will be shared in the November/December Sage Leaves Newsletter.

If you have questions, please call me at (262)376-0482.

Denise Nelson, Event Chair

Out and About

Chef's Table

The Classic Room and **Classic Bistro** at the Waukesha County Technical College invite the public in for lunch.

The students take turns working the "Front" and "Back" of the house.

Twelve plus members attended the French lunch last year. I'm waiting for a date to book this year.

We all enjoyed it so much, several members suggested we announce it to our entire group.

We carpool so no one will have to drive alone. It's a lot of fun and a food adventure.

Chicago International Tea Festival, November 1-3, to be held at the Holiday Inn Chicago Mart Plaza River North. Details can be found at www.citfest.com

Old World Wisconsin – Jeanne Christensen, Historical Gardener

Jeanne is the new Historical Gardener at Old World Wisconsin, and she comes to this position with a wealth of knowledge as a horticulturist, an associate lecturer, and a certified teacher. She previously was the UW-Extension Horticulture Educator for Kenosha and Racine Counties. She worked with the Master Gardeners, Plant Health Advisors and wrote articles for the Kenosha News. She coordinated the Spring into Gardening Conference in Kenosha County. She also has often presented sessions at the Waterford Public Library. In recent years, she was an assistant naturalist and then board member for the Friends Group at Richard Bong State Park.

–Melody Orban

Recipes

Oatmeal Lace Cookies

(Susie Bigham)

1/2 c	unsalted butter
1 c	dark brown sugar, packed
2 T	all purpose flour
2 t	vanilla
1/2 t	salt
1	large egg
1-1/2 c	thick cut rolled oats (Bob's Red Mill)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees - Line cookie sheet with parchment.

Melt butter and sugar. Stir until it turns into a thick brown paste. Remove from the heat. Stir in the vanilla, flour and salt. Cool for 10 minutes. Blend in the egg and oats. Stir well to distribute.

Spoon 1 tsp onto cookie sheet. Leave 2" or more between cookies (they spread). Use the back of a spoon to smooth into a thin circle. Oats should be in a single layer.

Bake @ 350 degrees for 10-12 minutes or until edges are golden brown. Let cool completely on parchment. Brush melted chocolate on one edge, or brush chocolate on the entire bottom then top with another cookie to make a sandwich cookie. Let chocolate harden before storing in an airtight container.

Blueberry Crumb Cake Recipe from Connie Taagen, Herb Fair 2019 –Connie added some lemon verbena to this recipe:

Blueberry Crumb Cake

MAKES 12 TO 16 SERVINGS

Crumb Topping (recipe follows)	1 cup milk
2 cups all-purpose flour	1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, melted
3/4 cup sugar	2 eggs, beaten
1 tablespoon baking powder	2 tablespoons lemon juice
1 teaspoon salt	2 cups fresh blueberries
1/2 teaspoon baking soda	

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Spray 13×9-inch baking pan with nonstick cooking spray. Prepare Crumb Topping.

2. Sift flour, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda into large bowl. Combine milk, butter, eggs and lemon juice in medium bowl. Pour into flour mixture; stir until blended. Pour batter into prepared pan.

3. Sprinkle blueberries evenly over batter; sprinkle with Crumb Topping.

4. Bake 40 to 45 minutes or until toothpick inserted into center comes out clean. Serve warm.

Crumb Topping: Combine 1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans, 3/4 cup sugar, 1/2 cup all-purpose flour, 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) softened butter and 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon in large bowl until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.



How to Make Herb-Flavored Vinegars

Your individual taste and the matter of what fresh herbs are available to you will determine what you use in your herbal vinegars. You can use one herb or a combination of as many as you like. In addition, you can combine herbs with other flavorings.

I prefer to use white wine or champagne vinegar for my base. You will be able to see the herbs well and the taste is neutral. White rice vinegar gives the same effect and is pleasantly mild. Distilled white vinegar, to me, is a bit strong-tasting and tends to overpower the herbs.

Red wine vinegar is the best base for flavored vinegars to be used in marinades and it's also the best match with garlic or shallots. Cider vinegar is well suited for flavoring with mint, basil (green or purple), or dill.

To flavor vinegar with fresh herbs:

Place a lightly packed cupful of rinsed (pat dry) fresh herbs in a sterilized, dry heatproof jar. Heat 2 cups of the chosen vinegar to simmering and pour it over the herbs, which should be completely immersed (heat more vinegar if needed). Cap the jar and let the herbs steep for at least 10 days, shaking the jar occasionally. Decant the vinegar (filter or strain it if desired) into a sterilized, completely dry bottle.

Store it, capped, in a cool, dark spot.

Flavor ideas

Single-herb: basil, mint, tarragon, chive, thyme, rosemary and dill.

Multi-herb combinations: Basil & chervil, Rosemary & tarragon, Thyme & sweet marjoram, Savory & thyme, Thyme & chives

Dried herbs, spices and seeds can be used in vinegars. Dill seed, caraway seed, juniper berries, cloves or cinnamon are a few suggestions.

Book references: Fancy Pantry by Helen Witty
Making & Using Flavored Vinegars by Glenn Andrews.

Eat Your Fall Flowers

(Ann McCormick, Herb 'n Cowgirl newsletter 9/18/18)

September is the month when the garden switches gears, moves into cooler weather, and we plant our fall annual flowers. Even an herb nut like myself enjoys having some fall color in my pots and garden beds. Some of those flowers also provide flavors you can add to your foods. Here's a sampling:

Garlic Chives – As I write this my garlic chives are in full bloom in the south garden. The large white hemispheres have a garlic flavor as you'd expect. Just pull apart the blossoms and add them to your salad.

Mints – My ginger mint and spearmint are showing their colors this month.



This spearmint is taking the advantage of cooler fall weather to produce these fuzzy edible blossoms.



Pansies – Surprise! These popular fall flowers are edible. The flavor is a slightly sweet wintergreen. Try them in a dish made with rotini pasta, chili peppers, and pansy petals.



Chrysanthemums – Another fall flower favorite is the chrysanthemum. Originating in China, this flower was sometimes used in teas. If you decide to try it, be sure to remove the bitter white base of the flower petals. Right now you'll find chrysanthemums on sale everywhere. This classic fall flower can be used in tea infusions.

Roses – If you are an herb enthusiast you know that roses are edible. Before vanilla became popular, rose water and rose oil was used to flavor cakes and other confections, to say nothing of beverages.

This is just a hint of the dozens of edible flowers available throughout the garden year. If you'd like to learn more, I recommend *Edible Flowers: From Garden to Palate*, by Cathy Wilkinson Barash.

Try These Flavors Posted on: February 12, 2019 by: Jacqueline Soule - Southwest Gardening

Some flower flavors are so delicate they defy immediate classification. Others have very pronounced flavors. The key thing is – do you personally like the flavor? Sample any of these and decide if you like them.

Tart or peppery flavors are great in salads. Flowers like nasturtium, radish, broccoli, mustard greens, oxalis (shamrock), or carnation, add color and piquant touch.

Sweet flowers like violets, pansies, ocotillo blooms, lavender, and roses all taste good with desserts like fruit compotes, or in cakes. Indeed, you can add many flowers to cakes. Lemon coffee cake is so much more festive with one-half cup of the lemony flowers of bee balm, calendula, or lemon blooms! Spice cake benefits from the nutty flavor of apple or apricot blooms (catch them on a cloth spread under the tree, thus you will still get fruit).



Mild flavored flowers that go with virtually anything include sunflower ("petals" only), calendula, and palo verde blooms.

The mauve stars of borage flowers perk up any dish, and their cucumbery flavor is good in gazpacho, salads, or in refreshing cucumber water.

If you like anise-like tarragon, the flowers of anise hyssop, fennel, and sweet marigold (also called Mexican marigold) are delightful straight off the plant. They also taste good in egg dishes like quiche, omelets, or Eggs Benedict.

If you are unsure of this whole concept of eating flowers – start with the flowers of herbs. Basil flowers can go into any dish where you would use basil, and they look great in salads. Garlic chive and society garlic flowers taste garlicky and are yummy in stir fry. Add some mint flowers to your next pitcher of iced tea.



Mint flowers are nectar rich and sweeten iced tea as they add a delicate touch of minty flavor.

Live a little! Just follow the Ten Rules for Edible Flowers below. Be bold. Experiment with taste and color. Flowers are fun, in the yard and on the table.

Ten Rules of Edible Flowers

1. Not all flowers are safe to eat. Some are poisonous.
2. Eat flowers only when you are positive they are edible.
3. Eat only flowers that have been grown organically. Mild-flavored calendula grows well in the cool season garden.
4. Do not eat flowers from florists, or straight after purchase at a nursery, or garden center (they may have been sprayed).
5. Do not eat flowers harvested from the side of the road, or from other potentially harmful sites.
6. It is best to eat only petals. When possible, remove pistils and stamens before eating.
7. Flowers often come in many varieties. Depending on cultivar, location, amount of water received, soil pH, and freshness, flower taste will vary. Edible is not always palatable.
8. Humans differ. What one person can eat may not be the same for everyone.
9. If you suffer from asthma or allergies, use care when introducing flowers into your diet.

Why It's Good to Leave the Leaves

Preen Seasonal Garden & Landscape Tips – Fall 2018



Fall leaves are a valuable resource, useful for replenishing a lawn or garden. And they're free!

When trees drop their leaves each fall, homeowners are conditioned to rake or blow them away as soon as possible. Then the piles are burned, collected by municipal trucks, or left to rot in a neighboring wooded area. Few people view this annual leaf drop as a plus. However, leaves decompose to benefit plants and the soil, making them a valuable – and free – resource instead of “nature’s trash”.

Why Treasure Dropped Leaves: Fallen leaves are an organic powerhouse. They are one of the main ingredients that Nature uses to create soil. When leaves from trees and shrubs drop and decay, they add nutrition and organic matter gradually to the soil. They provide a natural blanket or mulch that insulates the plants over winter, and are especially valuable on top of soon-to-be-dormant perennial flower beds. The combination of fallen leaves, grass clippings and/or spent plants from the yard makes the perfect recipe for homemade compost – the best antidote to lousy soil (be sure that weeds have not already gone to seed before composting). Leaves are such a valuable resource that avid/zealous gardeners have been known to gather leaves from others’ curbs.

What to Remove: Allowing the leaves to remain makes far more sense than trying to remove every last one – in most places. But leaves on hard surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks, and roads, for example, serve no useful purpose; that’s one place to blow them or bag them. Leaves that are diseased are best removed too – to the trash or at least out of the area containing plants susceptible to that disease.

Disease spores often overwinter in leaf litter, where they'll re-infect susceptible plants the following year, as soon as rain comes. A third potential removal area is on evergreen groundcover beds, such as vinca (*Vinca* spp.), ivy (*Hedera helix* & spp.) and Japanese pachysandra (*Pachysandra terminalis*). Thick piles of leaves here shut off sunlight, stunt growth, and may even kill these plants. A thin leaf layer, an inch or less though, is a different story. Light coverings of leaves over groundcovers usually decay and work their way into the ground before causing trouble.



In fall, don't rake weeds — mow them. A mulching mower can chop leaves into bits which form a fast-decaying mulch that feeds the grass.

Other Strategies: On lawns a better solution is to simply run over the leaves with a mower, rather than raking or blowing small amounts of them. Chopped into bits, those leaves become fast-decaying mulch that adds organic matter and nutrition to feed the grass. Unless the layer is very thick, chopped leaves don't cause thatch as many people think. University researchers have compared lawns in which leaves were mowed in vs. raked off, and the leaves-on lawns came out healthier and better performing. For those who like their lawns neat, run over the leaves twice to double-chop them, and cut often enough to ensure the amount per cut is manageable.

Unless the amount is huge, leaves that fall and/or blow into shrub and perennial beds or around trees can stay. They'll insulate over winter and decompose enough by spring that they perform the same job that purchased piles of mulch do. Given that this is free fertilizer and free mulch, it makes little sense to buy a rake or blower to move leaves to the curb, then pay municipal taxes to have the piles hauled away, and then buy bags of fertilizer and mulch in the spring. If you don't like the look of fallen leaves in beds, in spring top the existing leaf layer with a light dressing of wood mulch or bark chips. That'll give the "clean" look that so many "yardeners" relish.

Even in areas where leaves should be removed or thinned, think about recycling them on site. Instead of raking or blowing away leaves, relocate them to tree and shrub beds (preferably chopped), chop and use them as mulch for vegetable or flower beds, add them to the compost pile, or bag and keep some as mulch around next year's vegetable and flower plants.



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THE SCHOOL BUS

*Spitting and splashing it stops at the gate
Red eyes flashing, it signals "wait!"
Grumbling and rumbling along the lane
Stopping and waiting amid sun and rain
It swallows up children to start the school day
For children must learn that life is not play.
But each trip aboard the bright yellow craft
Another step from home's trusty path
A step taken lightly never counting the cost
Not know each step is babyhood lost.
We know time must push their world to grow
They tell how they learn with papers to show.
It won't be the same child we put on their way
That bus changes each life every school day.
The large yellow transport is more than a bus
It is the first looming look away from us.*

...jejanssen



If you have an event, article, recipe, etc. in which you feel members might be interested, please send to Diane at kescenovitz.diane@att.net and I will try to put it in the next issue of SAGE LEAVES if there is room.

Future SAGE LEAVES will be mailed out to arrive by 11/1/19 and 1/1/20.

